

AAPA Visit to TRL - Safety Issues Q and A

Statistics – injuries & fatalities? How measured & collected?

- Road users: statistics collected via STATS19 (national accident database for injury accidents / fatalities)
- Road workers: nationally to the Health and Safety Executive for injuries at work that cause absence of more than 7 days
- Highway authorities should collect details from their contractors e.g. Highways Agency in England via AIRSWeb
- Individual contractors collect data on everything from fatalities to near-misses using systems that invariably record slightly different data, usually in incompatible formats
- Highway authority data for contractor accidents is generally poor; under-reporting of even serious incidents appears to be commonplace
- This appears to be driven by a belief by contractors that accident records will be used as a metric for future contract award, which discourages accurate reporting
- Reinforced by the use of AFR as a KPI to manage safety; this has the unintended consequence of changing the behaviour of those involved with accident reporting
- Effective validation is key to accurate data; national data (e.g. STATS19) is always validated but validation of other data sources is carried out at point of use
- Point-of-use validation is difficult and time-consuming; without it, outputs from accident database analyses tend to be of questionable reliability

What are the greatest road worker risks?

- The risk to road users of dying in a crash on any road in the UK is around 1 in 16,000
- The risk of injury for road (construction) workers is comparable: 1 in 15,000, similar to the risk of injury for construction workers on general construction sites
- **The risk to temporary traffic management operatives is 1 in 1,000 – fifteen times higher than for a road construction worker**
- **The greatest risk to any road worker is associated with setting out and removing temporary traffic management equipment (cones, signs etc.) on a high speed road**
- TRL is working with the Highways Agency to develop a suite of measures to drive down this risk; we are “Aiming for Zero” worker injuries and fatalities
- Progress towards this goal is being monitored via statistics but also via the Measurement of Injury Risk (MIRi) Index developed by TRL

What training is available?

- Standard for work on high speed roads is the National Highways Sector Scheme (NHSS) which covers a range of skills.
- NHSS is administered by LANTRA Awards (www.lantra-awards.co.uk) and courses are delivered by both training providers and accredited in-house trainers
- NHSS specifies an element of on-the-job training; only one trainee is permitted per works crew
- Standards for urban roads are lower; under the New Road and Street Works Act, only one operative in a gang must be trained and competent.

What techniques / methods for safer maintenance?

- Emphasis is moving towards “less is more” when it comes to traffic management, adopting approach of eliminate / mitigate / manage. For example:
 - ELIMINATE: don't put signs in the central reservation
 - MITIGATE: reduce the number of signs needed by missing some out
 - MANAGE: place the signs from vehicles
- Safer maintenance can be cheaper or the same price maintenance; achieving this means it will be embraced by all parties.
- Some techniques are more expensive but can deliver time savings; in this case the benefits mean they are also adopted
- Other approaches deliver the same function as present practices for more money; these are more difficult to sell!
- Risk based approaches are being adopted, enabling some maintenance activities to be delayed until they can be undertaken within scheduled works
- New contract terms seek to undertake less maintenance, ironically driving down the risk to road workers involved in maintenance activity

Communicating road worker safety needs to the public – how?

- Issue is not restricted to the public; road worker safety has a poor level of awareness within even the road maintenance / planning professional community
- Articles in professional journals (e.g Network Management Note from the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation)
- Within industry, initiatives such as the Road Workers' Safety Forum Newsletter (www.rowsaf.org.uk)
- National governmental publicity campaigns such as 'Respect Our Road Workers' (<http://www.highways.gov.uk/knowledge/20639.aspx>)
- Local media campaigns such as radio commercials (examples on www.rowsaf.org.uk)

Urban & multi accessed sites – any special safety approaches?

- Urban sites need higher standards of guarding and management for pedestrians and vulnerable road users
- Minimum standard often applied; independent auditing of design and engagement with end-users used to ensure that needs of special groups are met
- Multi-access sites: site accesses need to be managed carefully to ensure that risk of traffic movement within site is regulated
- Identifying site access is a problem on some sites; use of innovative markers at accesses apparently helps!

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